

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
BRUNSWICK DIVISION**

RUFUS LEE KING, JR.,

Petitioner,

v.

LINDA GETER,

Respondent.

CIVIL ACTION NO.: 2:20-cv-79

**MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

This matter comes before the Court on Petitioner Rufus King's ("King") failure to comply with the Court's September 15 and October 19, 2020 Orders and this Court's Local Rules and Respondent's Motion to Dismiss. Docs. 4, 5, 10. For the following reasons, I **RECOMMEND** the Court **DISMISS without prejudice** King's 28 U.S.C. § 2241 Petition, doc. 1, for failure to follow this Court's Orders and Local Rules, **DENY as moot** Respondent's Motion to Dismiss, doc. 4, **DIRECT** the Clerk of Court to **CLOSE** this case and enter the appropriate judgment of dismissal, and **DENY** King leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A "district court can only dismiss an action on its own motion as long as the procedure employed is fair. . . . To employ fair procedure, a district court must generally provide the plaintiff with notice of its intent to dismiss or an opportunity to respond." Tazoe v. Airbus S.A.S., 631 F.3d 1321, 1336 (11th Cir. 2011) (citations and internal quotation marks omitted). A magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation provides such notice and opportunity to respond. See Shivers v. Int'l Bhd. of Elec. Workers Local Union, 349, 262 F. App'x 121, 125, 127 (11th Cir. 2008) (indicating that a party has notice of a district court's intent to sua sponte grant summary judgment where a magistrate judge issues a report recommending the sua sponte granting of summary judgment); Anderson v. Dunbar Armored, Inc., 678 F. Supp. 2d 1280, 1296 (N.D. Ga. 2009) (noting that report and recommendation served as notice that claims would be sua sponte dismissed). This Report and Recommendation constitutes fair notice to King that his suit is due to be dismissed. As indicated below, King will have the opportunity to present his objections to this finding, and the presiding district judge will review de novo properly submitted objections. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72; see also Glover v. Williams, No. 1:12-CV-3562, 2012 WL 5930633, at \*1 (N.D. Ga. Oct. 18, 2012) (explaining that magistrate judge's report and

## BACKGROUND

King filed this 28 U.S.C. § 2241 action while he was housed at the Federal Correctional Institution in Jesup, Georgia. Doc. 1. After he paid the requisite filing fee, the Court directed service of King's Petition on August 3, 2020. Doc. 3. By this same Order, the Court advised King to notify the Court of any change in address and warned him that his failure to do so would result in the dismissal of his cause of action. Id. at 2. In addition, this Court's Local Rules provide, "Each . . . *pro se* litigant has a continuing obligation to apprise the Court of any address change." Local R. 11.1.

Respondent filed a Motion to Dismiss and stated King's Petition should be dismissed, as he was not entitled to additional good conduct time credit but was due to receive credit against his sentence under the First Step Act of 2018. Doc. 4 at 2. The Court ordered King to respond to the Motion to Dismiss within 14 days of the September 15, 2020 Order, and the Court also granted King an extension of time until October 21, 2020 to file any desired response by Order dated September 24, 2020. Docs. 5, 7. The Court's September 24, 2020 Order was returned to the Court as undeliverable, with the notations: "Return to Sender, Not Here." Doc. 9. Thus, the Court issued an Order on October 19, 2020, directing King to notify the Court of his change of address in writing and warning King his failure to do so would result in the dismissal of his cause of action. Doc. 10. The Court reminded King to respond to the Motion to Dismiss and again warned his failure to do so would result in the dismissal of this cause of action. Id. This Order, too, was returned to the Court as undeliverable, with the notations: "Return to Sender, Not

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recommendation constituted adequate notice and petitioner's opportunity to file objections provided a reasonable opportunity to respond).

Here.” Doc. 11. In addition, King has not responded to this Court’s Orders or Respondent’s Motion to Dismiss.

## DISCUSSION

The Court must now determine how to address King’s failure to comply with this Court’s Orders and Local Rules. For the reasons set forth below, I **RECOMMEND** the Court **DISMISS without prejudice** King’s Petition and **DENY** King leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*.

### I. Dismissal for Failure to Follow This Court’s Orders and Local Rules

A district court may dismiss a petitioner’s claims sua sponte pursuant to either Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) or the court’s inherent authority to manage its docket.<sup>2</sup> Link v. Wabash R.R. Co., 370 U.S. 626 (1962);<sup>3</sup> Coleman v. St. Lucie Cnty. Jail, 433 F. App’x 716, 718 (11th Cir. 2011) (citing Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b) and Betty K Agencies, Ltd. v. M/V MONADA, 432 F.3d 1333, 1337 (11th Cir. 2005)). In particular, Rule 41(b) allows for the involuntary dismissal of a petitioner’s claims where he has failed to prosecute those claims, comply with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or local rules, or follow a court order. Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b); see also Coleman, 433 F. App’x at 718; Sanders v. Barrett, No. 05-12660, 2005 WL 2640979, at \*1 (11th Cir. Oct. 17, 2005) (citing Kilgo v. Ricks, 983 F.2d 189, 192 (11th Cir. 1993)); cf. Local R. 41.1(b) (“[T]he assigned Judge may, after notice to counsel of record, *sua sponte* . . . dismiss any action for want of prosecution, with or without prejudice[,] . . . [based on] willful disobedience

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<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Rule 1(b) of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases, the § 2254 Rules may be applied to § 2241 petitions. Additionally, pursuant to Rule 12 of the § 2254 Rules, the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure may apply to a habeas petition, to the extent the Civil Rules are not inconsistent with the § 2254 Rules.

<sup>3</sup> In Wabash, the Court held that a trial court may dismiss an action for failure to prosecute “even without affording notice of its intention to do so.” 370 U.S. at 633. Nonetheless, in the case at hand, the Court advised King his failure to comply with this Court’s Orders would result in dismissal of this action. Docs. 5, 10.

or neglect of any order of the Court.” (emphasis omitted)). Additionally, a district court’s “power to dismiss is an inherent aspect of its authority to enforce its orders and ensure prompt disposition of lawsuits.” Brown v. Tallahassee Police Dep’t, 205 F. App’x 802, 802 (11th Cir. 2006) (quoting Jones v. Graham, 709 F.2d 1457, 1458 (11th Cir. 1983)).

It is true that dismissal with prejudice for failure to prosecute is a “sanction . . . to be utilized only in extreme situations” and requires that a court “(1) conclud[e] a clear record of delay or willful contempt exists; and (2) mak[e] an implicit or explicit finding that lesser sanctions would not suffice.” Thomas v. Montgomery Cnty. Bd. of Educ., 170 F. App’x 623, 625–26 (11th Cir. 2006) (quoting Morewitz v. West of Eng. Ship Owners Mut. Prot. & Indem. Ass’n (Lux.), 62 F.3d 1356, 1366 (11th Cir. 1995)); see also Taylor v. Spaziano, 251 F. App’x 616, 619 (11th Cir. 2007) (citing Morewitz, 62 F.3d at 1366). By contrast, dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute is not an adjudication on the merits, and, therefore, courts are afforded greater discretion in dismissing claims in this manner. Taylor, 251 F. App’x at 619; see also Coleman, 433 F. App’x at 719; Brown, 205 F. App’x at 802–03.

While the Court exercises its discretion to dismiss cases with caution, dismissal of this action without prejudice is warranted. See Coleman, 433 F. App’x at 719 (upholding dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute where plaintiff did not respond to court order to supply defendant’s current address for purpose of service); Taylor, 251 F. App’x at 620–21 (upholding dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute, because plaintiffs insisted on going forward with deficient amended complaint rather than complying, or seeking an extension of time to comply, with court’s order to file second amended complaint); Brown, 205 F. App’x at 802–03 (upholding dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute where plaintiff failed to follow

court order to file amended complaint and court had informed plaintiff that noncompliance could lead to dismissal).

With King having failed to update his address, as required, the Court cannot proceed in this case. In addition, King did not respond to the Motion to Dismiss. Moreover, King was given notice of the consequences of his failure to follow the Court's Orders, and King has not made any effort to do so. Thus, the Court should **DISMISS without prejudice** King's § 2241 Petition, doc. 1, for failure to follow this Court's Orders and Local Rules and **DIRECT** the Clerk of Court to **CLOSE** this case and enter the appropriate judgment of dismissal.

## **II. Leave to Appeal in *Forma Pauperis***

The Court should also deny King leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*. Though King has not yet filed a notice of appeal, it would be appropriate to address that issue in the Court's order of dismissal. See Fed. R. App. P. 24(a)(3) (trial court may certify that appeal is not taken in good faith "before or after the notice of appeal is filed").

An appeal cannot be taken *in forma pauperis* if the trial court certifies, either before or after the notice of appeal is filed, that the appeal is not taken in good faith. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3); Fed. R. App. P. 24(a)(3). Good faith in this context must be judged by an objective standard. Busch v. County of Volusia, 189 F.R.D. 687, 691 (M.D. Fla. 1999). A party does not proceed in good faith when he seeks to advance a frivolous claim or argument. See Coppedge v. United States, 369 U.S. 438, 445 (1962). A claim or argument is frivolous when it appears the factual allegations are clearly baseless or the legal theories are indisputably meritless. Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 327 (1989); Carroll v. Gross, 984 F.2d 392, 393 (11th Cir. 1993). An *in forma pauperis* action is frivolous and not brought in good faith if it is "without arguable merit

either in law or fact.” Napier v. Preslicka, 314 F.3d 528, 531 (11th Cir. 2002); see also Brown v. United States, Nos. 407CV085, 403CR001, 2009 WL 307872, at \*1–2 (S.D. Ga. Feb. 9, 2009).

Based on the above analysis of King’s failure to follow this Court’s Order, there are no non-frivolous issues to raise on appeal, and an appeal would not be taken in good faith. Thus, the Court should **DENY** King *in forma pauperis* status on appeal.

### CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, I **RECOMMEND** the Court **DISMISS without prejudice** King’s 28 U.S.C. § 2241 Petition, doc. 1, for failure to follow this Court’s Orders and Local Rules, **DENY as moot** Respondent’s Motion to Dismiss, doc. 4, **DIRECT** the Clerk of Court to **CLOSE** this case and enter the appropriate judgment of dismissal, and **DENY** King leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*.

Any objections to this Report and Recommendation shall be filed within 14 days of today’s date. Objections shall be specific and in writing. Any objection that the Magistrate Judge failed to address a contention raised in the Complaint must be included. Failure to file timely, written objections will bar any later challenge or review of the Magistrate Judge’s factual findings and legal conclusions. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C); Harrigan v. Metro Dade Police Dep’t Station #4, No. 17-11264, 2020 WL 6039905, at \*4 (11th Cir. Oct. 13, 2020). To be clear, a party waives all rights to challenge the Magistrate Judge’s factual findings and legal conclusions on appeal by failing to file timely, written objections. Harrigan, 2020 WL 6039905, at \*4; 11th Cir. R. 3-1. A copy of the objections must be served upon all other parties to the action.

Upon receipt of Objections meeting the specificity requirement set out above, a United States District Judge will make a de novo determination of those portions of the report, proposed findings, or recommendation to which objection is made and may accept, reject, or modify in

whole or in part, the findings or recommendations made by the Magistrate Judge. Objections not meeting the specificity requirement set out above will not be considered by a District Judge. A party may not appeal a Magistrate Judge's report and recommendation directly to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit. Appeals may be made only from a final judgment entered by or at the direction of a District Judge.

**SO REPORTED and RECOMMENDED**, this 5th day of November, 2020.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Cheesbro', is written over a horizontal line.

BENJAMIN W. CHEESBRO  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA